

Application No. 10/803,950
Amendment dated December 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2006

Docket No.: 42339-199895

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A system comprising:
 - an operating system adapted to operate on a processor;
 - a memory device having a protected area, wherein said protected area is not directly accessible to said operating system;
 - firmware coupled to said memory device;
 - a virtual machine manager installed in said firmware operative to provide said operating system access to said protected area independently of any hardware controller of said memory device-controller.
2. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of protected areas on said memory device.
3. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said memory device comprises a hard disk.
4. (Original) The system of claim 2, wherein said system functions as a redundant array of independent disks (RAID).
5. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising a known working configuration stored in said protected area, wherein said known working configuration comprises critical file-system structures.
6. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said firmware provides operating system-specific file-system support.
7. (Original) The system of claim 1, further comprising extensibility modules stored in said protected area for pre-boot support.

Application No. 10/803,950
Amendment dated December 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2006

Docket No.: 42339-199895

8. (Original) The system of claim 1, wherein said firmware provides operating system-independent file-system support.

9. (Currently amended) A method comprising:

- (a) protecting an area on a memory device;
- (b) providing a virtual machine manager (VMM) in firmware coupled to said memory device; and
- (c) providing access to said protected area through said VMM independently of any hardware controller of said memory device-controller.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein (c) further comprises:

- proxying an access request for said protected area with said VMM; and
- executing said access request to said protected area with said VMM.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein (a) further comprises protecting a plurality of areas on said memory device.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising

- (d) using said plurality of protected areas as a redundant array of independent disks (RAID).

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein (c) further comprises:

- translating a logical block address (LBA) request for said RAID to said plurality of protected areas; and
- executing said LBA request.

14. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

Application No. 10/803,950
Amendment dated December 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2006

Docket No.: 42339-199895

- (d) storing a known working configuration in said protected area, wherein said known working configuration comprises critical file-system structures; and
- (e) using said known working configuration when a computer adapted to execute said method is unable to boot properly.

15. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

- (d) providing operating system-specific file-system support with said firmware.

16. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

- (d) storing extensibility modules in said protected area for pre-boot support.

17. (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising:

- (d) providing operating system-independent file-system support with said firmware.

18. (Currently amended) A machine-accessible medium containing code that, when executed by a computing platform, causes the computing platform to perform a method comprising:

- (a) protecting an area on a memory device;
- (b) using a virtual machine manager (VMM) coupled to said memory device; and
- (c) providing access to said protected area through said VMM independently of any hardware controller of said memory device-controller.

19. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 18, wherein (c) further comprises:
proxying an access request for said protected area with said VMM; and
executing said access request to said protected area with said VMM.

Application No. 10/803,950
Amendment dated December 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2006

Docket No.: 42339-199895

20. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 18, wherein (a) further comprises reserving a plurality of areas on said memory device.
21. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 20, further containing code that, when executed by a computing platform, causes said method to further comprise:
- (d) using said plurality of protected areas as a redundant array of independent disks (RAID).
22. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 21, wherein (c) further comprises:
- translating a logical block address (LBA) request for said RAID to said protected areas; and
 - executing said LBA request.
23. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 18, further containing code that, when executed by a computing platform, causes said method to further comprise:
- (d) storing a known working configuration in said protected area, wherein said known working configuration comprises critical file-system structures; and
 - (e) using said known working configuration when the computing platform is unable to boot properly.
24. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 18, further containing code that, when executed by a computing platform, causes said method to further comprise:
- (d) providing operating system-specific file-system support with said firmware.
25. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 18, further containing code that, when executed by a computing platform, causes said method to further comprise:
- (d) storing extensibility modules in said protected area for pre-boot support.

Application No. 10/803,950
Amendment dated December 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of September 27, 2006

Docket No.: 42339-199895

26. (Original) The machine-accessible medium of claim 18, further containing code that, when executed by a computing platform, causes said method to further comprise:
- (d) providing operating system-independent file-system support with said firmware.